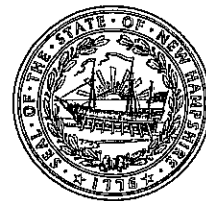




The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

March 12, 2009

The Honorable Martha Fuller Clark, Chairman
Senate Energy, Environment & Economic Development Committee
LOB 102
Concord, NH 03301

RE: SB 44, establishing a commission to review all fees charged by the department of environmental services

Dear Chairman Fuller Clark,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 44, which would establish a commission to all fees charged by the Department of Environmental Services to determine which produce revenues equal to 125 percent of program operating costs.

Over the past several budget cycles, the Department's budget has reflected an increasing reliance on fees charged to regulated entities and the recipients of environmental services, and a decreasing reliance on general fund revenues. The proposed FY 2010 budget for DES is about \$233 million, 13 % of which is identified as general funds, 32% as federal funds and 56% as "other" funds, including revolving loan fund repayments and fees charged by the Department for permit activities. It is certainly the trend in the State's funding of its environmental programs to shift the costs to the beneficiaries of, or permittees under, particular environmental laws, and away from the public at large. Moreover, DES anticipates moving toward more unified permitting approaches over the next few years. The policy implications of these trends and strategic directions are worthy of a focused review by the Legislature.

The Department supports SB 44 and looks forward to providing information about the funding of its programs to the study commission.

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding this bill, please contact me at 271-2958 or Chief Operations Officer Susan Carlson at 271-1881.

Sincerely,

Michael Wales, Asst. Comm.
for Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Committee members